

Message Text

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TO USDEL SECRETARY NIACT IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 231617 TOSEC 270332

TEGUCIGALPA FOR ASST SEC SHLAUDEMAN FROM LUERS

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM FROM PANAMA DATED SEPTEMBER 17, 1976
SENT SECSTATE WASHDC INFO USCINCSO, PANCANAL IS REPEATED
TO YOU: QUOTE

S E C R E T PANAMA 6484

EYES ONLY FOR CINC AND GOVERNOR PARFITT

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PN

SUBJECT: TALK WITH MINISTER BOYD

REFS: (A) JORDEN-BELL TELECON (B) PANAMA 6465

1. FOREIGN MINISTER BOYD CALLED ME THIS MORNING TO ASK
THAT I COME TO HIS OFFICE AT NOON. AT OUR MEETING, HE
SAID HE HAD CALLED ME IN TO DELIVER A PROTEST NOTE
(TEXT SEPTEL) REGARDING THE QUOTE INTERVENTION UNQUOTE
OF ARMED FORCES PERSONNEL OF THE U.S. IN THE RECENT
EVENTS IN PANAMA. BOYD STRESSED AT THE OUTSET THAT HE
WAS QUOTE ACTING UNDER INSTRUCTIONS UNQUOTE AND HE REPEATED
THIS SEVERAL TIMES. IT MAY HAVE BEEN AN EFFORT TO INDICATE
THAT HE HIMSELF WAS NOT TOO CONVINCED OF WHAT HE WAS

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RELAYING TO ME. HE SAID HE WOULD NOT TROUBLE TO READ THE

ENTIRE NOTE (SEVEN PAGES) BECAUSE HE WAS SURE I HAD READ THE GOVERNMENT STATEMENT IN THE MORNING PAPERS (SEE REFTTEL B AND RELATED). I SAID THAT WAS CORRECT. HE SAID HIS GOVERNMENT WAS OBJECTING STRONGLY TO THE PARTICIPATION OF OUR MILITARY PERSONNEL IN THE STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS AND TO THE QUOTE CONSPIRATORIAL UNQUOTE ACTIVITIES OF SOME PERSONNEL OF THE PANAMA CANAL ZONE AND CANAL COMPANY.

2. AFTER HIS RATHER LENGTHY INTRODUCTORY REMARKS, HE ASKED FOR COMMENT. I TOLD THE MINISTER I COULD ASSURE HIM EMPHATICALLY THAT NEITHER THE U.S. GOVERNMENT NOR ANY OF ITS DEPARTMENTS OR AGENCIES HAD ANY CONNECTION WHATSOEVER WITH THE RECENT EVENTS IN PANAMA. I SAID HE SHOULD KNOW IT WAS NOT OUR POLICY TO INTERFERE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF OTHER FRIENDLY NATIONS. INDEED, WE HAD SPECIAL REASONS FOR WISHING TO MAINTAIN CLOSE TIES OF FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION WITH PANAMA. I SAID I WAS BOTH SURPRISED AND DISAPPOINTED TO HAVE READ THE ALLEGATIONS IN TODAY'S NEWSPAPERS, ALLEGATIONS THAT WERE PATENTLY FALSE. I SAID THAT THE STATEMENT AUTHORED BY HIS GOVERNMENT AND PRINTED IN OFFICIAL NEWSPAPERS WAS A CLEAR INDICATION THAT PANAMANIAN AUTHORITIES WERE TRYING TO SHIFT RESPONSIBILITY TO MY COUNTRY FOR WHAT WAS OBVIOUSLY AN INTERNAL DEVELOPMENT CAUSED BY ECONOMIC AND EDUCATIONAL AND POLITICAL PROBLEMS. HE ASKED HOW I COULD EXPLAIN THE PRESENCE OF U.S. MILITARY PERSONNEL WITH THE STUDENT DEMONSTRATORS. I SAID I WAS NOT PRESENT AND DID NOT HAVE THE FACTS. BUT I TOLD HIM THAT ON EVERY DAY OF EVERY MONTH THERE ARE MANY U.S. PERSONNEL IN DOWNTOWN PANAMA--BUYING GOODS AT SHOPS, HAVING A BEER, ETC. IT WAS NOT SURPRISING THAT A FEW AMERICANS MIGHT HAVE GOT CAUGHT UP IN THE MOB. I DID NOT KNOW WHAT THESE FEW INDIVIDUALS HAD DONE. BUT I TOLD HIM THAT THEY WERE VERY LOW-RANKING PERSONNEL AND I COULD ASSURE HIM THAT NOTHING THEY DID WAS ON THE ORDERS OF ANY RESPONSIBLE SUPERIOR. I ALSO DENIED THEY WERE QUOTE INTELLIGENCE UNQUOTE PERSONNEL.

3. HE THEN ASKED ME ABOUT THE ALLEGED QUOTE PLOTTING UNQUOTE OF SOME AMERICANS IN THE CANAL ZONE. I TOLD HIM THAT WE HAD NO CONTROL OVER WHAT INDIVIDUAL AMERICANS THOUGHT OR SAID OR WHOM THEY MET. BUT I COULD ASSURE HIM THAT
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WHATEVER THESE INDIVIDUALS MAY HAVE SAID OR DONE, IT HAD NO CONNECTION WHATSOEVER WITH MY GOVERNMENT OR ITS POLICY.

4. I THEN TOLD THE MINISTER I WISHED TO DISCUSS A SEPARATE BUT RELATED MATTER. THIS CONCERNED THE INTERVIEW GRANTED TO THE NEW YORK TIMES BY HIS AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON AND THE RELEASE TO MR. BINDER OF A SO-CALLED QUOTE CHRONOLOGY OF A FLIPFLOP UNQUOTE. I SAID MY PERSONAL REACTION

AND I BELIEVED THE REACTION OF MY GOVERNMENT WAS ONE OF ASTONISHMENT, CHAGRIN AND DEEP DISAPPOINTMENT. I SAID IT WAS FLAGRANT VIOLATION OF THE CONFIDENTIALITY WHICH BOTH PARTIES HAD AGREED SHOULD GOVERN THE TREATY NEGOTIATIONS. MOREOVER, I SAID, IT WAS AN UNJUSTIFIED ATTACK ON THE PRESIDENT'S COMMITMENT TO PURSUE A NEW TREATY. I REMINDED BOYD THAT FROM 1971 THROUGH 1972--MORE THAN A YEAR--WE HAD BEEN EAGER TO NEGOTIATE. BUT AT THAT TIME, FOR ITS OWN INTERNAL POLITICAL REASONS--WRITING A NEW CONSTITUTION, ELECTING A NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, ETC.--PANAMA HAD DECLINED TO TALK AND ASKED US TO BE PATIENT. NOW, IN THE MIDST OF A MAJOR ELECTION CAMPAIGN, WE HAD ASKED PANAMA TO DO THE SAME FOR US. IT SEEMED THAT PATIENCE WAS A ONE-SIDED VIRTUE. I TOLD HIM THIS LATEST EFFORT TO PUT PRESSURE ON US WOULD SURELY BE READ BY MANY IN THE U.S. AS AN EFFORT TO EMBARRASS THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY OF STATE AT A SENSITIVE TIME. IN ADDITION, I SAID, THIS CHRONOLOGY--WHICH I UNDERSTOOD WAS BOTH INCOMPLETE AND INACCURATE--WAS A PROFOUND EMBARRASSMENT TO AMBASSADOR BUNKER, A MAN WHO HAD BEEN WORKING LONG AND HARD TO HELP PANAMA ACHIEVE A FAIR SETTLEMENT. I SAID IT WAS IN-COMPREHENSIBLE TO ME HOW PANAMA COULD TREAT MY COLLEAGUE IN THIS FASHION.

5. FINALLY, I SAID, THIS PROPAGANDA EFFORT, TOGETHER WITH THE ONE LAUNCHED HERE TODAY, RAISED SERIOUS QUESTIONS IN OUR MINDS WHETHER PANAMA REALLY WISHED TO PROCEED WITH THE NEGOTIATIONS AT THIS TIME. THE ACTIONS OF THE PAST TWO DAYS WOULD--IN MY PERSONAL OPINION--MAKE IT DIFFICULT IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE TO PROCEED WITH FRIENDLY TALKS, CERTAINLY NOT IN THE SAME SPIRIT WHICH HAD PREVAILED IN THOSE CONVERSATIONS TO DATE. MY GOVERNMENT WAS ASKING HOW WE SHOULD INTERPRET PANAMA'S ACTIONS. I, IN TURN, WAS ASKING HIM.

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6. THE MINISTER SEEMED TAKEN ABACK BY MY PRESENTATION. HE SAID HE WAS NOT FULLY AWARE OF PRECISELY WHAT AMBASSADOR GONZALEZ-REVILLA HAD DONE NOR HAD HE SEEN THE SO-CALLED QUOTE CHRONOLOGY UNQUOTE. HE SAID HE WOULD TALK TO THE AMBASSADOR IMMEDIATELY. HE SAID THAT HE WOULD ALSO HAVE TO TALK DIRECTLY TO GENERAL TORRIJOS AND WOULD CONVEY TO HIM WHAT I HAD SAID. WE PARTED WITH A HANDSHAKE--A COOL ONE. JORDAN UNQUOTE ROBINSON

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